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SUBJECT: INDONESIA PLANS TO RAISE FOOD SECURITY AT UNGA

¶1. (SBU) Summary. A Senior Official at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (DEPLU) confirmed that Indonesia plans to raise food security during the high-level meetings at the UN General Assembly in September. The Government of Indonesia (GOI) is primarily focused on generating increased investment in agriculture from the international community. The Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs is currently developing a strategy to improve agriculture production and ensure food security in Indonesia. DEPLU requested US technical assistance to improve Indonesian farmers' access to technology and to train young diplomats in negotiating international agreements. End Summary.

GOI to Raise Food Security at Upcoming UNGA

¶2. (SBU) The GOI plans to raise food security issues at the high level meetings of the UN General Assembly in September, according to the Director of Trade, Industry, Investment and IPR at DEPLU. GOI officials are still discussing the most effective way to pursue the issue at the September meetings. The primary objective of the GOI is to secure the international community's commitment to increase agriculture investment in developing nations. The official worried that the recent drop in oil and commodity prices might remove some urgency within the international community on the need to improve agriculture production in poorer nations. He also noted that Indonesia is concerned that some of the support promised to developing countries at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's High-Level Conference on Food Security in June would be provided as soft loans rather than grants.

Coordinating Ministry Developing Food Security Plan

¶3. (SBU) According to the DEPLU official, the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs has been tasked with developing a comprehensive plan to improve agriculture production in Indonesia. The details of the plan, which is expected to be announced before the end of the year, remain vague. However, the official noted that the GOI is considering policies to improve irrigation and to restrict the conversion of rice paddies for non-agricultural purposes. He did not expect significant progress on the use of biotechnology in Indonesian farming.

DEPLU Requests Technical Assistance for Farmers, Diplomats

14. (SBU) The DEPLU official requested US technical assistance to improve access to technology for small-scale farmers and to train young diplomats in negotiating international agreements. He noted that majority of Indonesian farmers remain hostage to irregular weather patterns, which cause significant damage to crops every year. He urged the United States to consider technical assistance programs aimed at improving irrigation systems and access to technology for small-scale farmers. The official also inquired about US assistance in training young diplomats in negotiating techniques and in understanding legal issues related to international agreements. In his view, this investment would help improve the pace and quality of trade and other bi-lateral and multi-lateral negotiations.

HUME